

CALIFORNIA'S CROP PRODUCTION REPORT

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April's crop production forecast shows increases for some commodities when compared to estimates from last season's crops. The latest survey, which was conducted during the last week of March and the first week of April, includes the following commodities:

Navel Oranges - The *Navel orange* forecast is 80.0 million cartons, unchanged from January and up 90% from last season's freeze-damaged crop. Harvest of the Navel orange crop progressed in March with approximately two-thirds of the crop picked by April 1. Reported quality is generally good, but growers are concerned about puff and crease. Substantial rainfall in January and February enhanced fruit growth.

Valencia Oranges - The *Valencia orange* forecast is 54.0 million cartons, unchanged from January's forecast and up 80% from last season's freeze-damaged crop. Harvest of the Valencia orange crop is underway in the desert area with good quality reported.

Grapefruit - The California *grapefruit* forecast is estimated at 16.0 million cartons. This is up 7% from the 1998-99 production and unchanged from the January forecast. In February, all varieties of grapefruit reversed their four-month trend of sluggish fruit growth. With the cooperation of favorable weather conditions, all varieties showed tremendous increases in fruit size. Small fruit sizes are still apparent in Marsh Whites, but Star Rubies and Marsh Rubies show good fruit size. Aided by a dry March in Southern California, picking of grapefruit was active.

Lemons - The 1999-2000 California *lemon* forecast is 40.0 million cartons. This is up 23% from the 1998-99 production of 32.4 million cartons, but down 5% from the January 2000 forecast of 42.0 million cartons. In the Central Valley, considerable loss of harvest-time occurred due to heavy precipitation during late February and early March. Fruit colors are mostly light green and silver. In the south coastal growing-region, the season is approximately four to six weeks later than normal, with precipitation hampering the harvest activity. In the Desert area, the 1999-2000 season is nearly complete. Heavy winds this period may have caused slight damage. Statewide, fruit quality is good with few grade and condition problems.

Tangerines - The 1999-2000 California *tangerine* forecast is 4.20 million cartons. This is up 40% from last season's freeze-damaged crop of 3.00 million cartons, but down 9% from the January 2000 forecast. In the Central Valley, harvest of Satsumas continues with good results. In the Desert region, the condition of Fairchild tangerines is good, with excellent color and eating quality. Statewide defects include wind scar and sunburn.

Strawberries - The 2000 California *strawberry* production is forecast at a record 16.3 million cwt., up 7% from the 1999 crop of 15.2 million cwt. Harvested acreage is estimated at 27,600, 12% higher than the acreage estimated for 1999. The resulting yield is 590 cwt. per acre. Relatively warm temperatures during December and January in Southern California helped to get strawberry production off to a good start. Rainfall during the latter part of February substantially slowed strawberry production. However, the weather improved during early March allowing production to increase.

Production forecasts are released on a monthly basis and do not reflect final production estimates. The next production forecast will be issued May 12, 2000.